U.S. Geological Survey Bench Mark was placed on North Francis Peak in 1954.

MOUNTAINS

Either way you look, Francis is tallest

Morgan and Davis counties' highest peaks straddle boundary, share a name.

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Stories and photos by Lynn Arave
Deseret News staff writer

The panorama from North Francis Peak includes a view of the shorter Francis, bearing the Federal Aviation Administration's radar stations, to the south.

Getting to S. Francis Peak and the FAA radar stations

Take I-15 exit No. 326 and/or get onto Main Street in Farmington. Go east to 100 East and head north. This road eventually becomes the Farmington Canyon road and goes up the canyon more than a mile before becoming a dirt road with numerous switchbacks.

A truck, jeep or motorcycle is the best transportation on the road, although most cars can make the trip. Even mountain bicyclists use the road. After about seven miles, be sure to take the north road leading to the radar towers. (The south road is the Bountiful Peak road and ends at the "B" on the mountain in Bountiful.)

A four-wheel-drive road continues past the back side of the radar towers to the the top of Baer Canyon and the Smith Creek Lakes. It is 12.8 miles from the mouth of Farmington Canyon to the radar towers.

The Farmington Canyon road was built as a CCC project in the 1930s. The road to the radar towers was improved in the 1950s in conjunction with their construction. The Forest Service maintains the lower portion of the road, while the Federal Aviation Administration takes care of the upper portion.

The FAA uses the road year-round to access the radar towers. A proposed tramway to the towers up Shepherd Canyon was deemed too expensive.

Hiking to North Francis Peak

While the Francis Peak radar towers can be easily reached on a dirt road, 9,706-foot-tall North Francis Peak requires a rugged eight-mile, one-way hike that ascends 4,800 feet.

There's a lot of private land in the foothills, and this complicates access to the best trail, located between Hobbs Canyon and the middle fork of Kays Creek (between the Fernwood Picnic area and Hill Field Road). The rugged skyline trail is marked on Forest Service maps, though.

To find the trailhead, walk up a private dirt road east of the junction of U.S. 89 (Mountain Road) and Hill Field Road. (Landowner Mel West of Layton is concerned about motorized vehicles, not hikers, on his land.)

After reaching the mouth of Hobbs Canyon, head south on the fire road and after crossing a stream, look for a faded trail to the east — 600 yards later — after coming to the top of a small hill.

This rough trail is more like a stream bed and is not only steep but has numerous loose rocks. It goes up the ridge, with a few switchbacks, but mostly heads almost straight up. The trail is not maintained at all.

The route crosses through several mini-forests of pine and aspen trees. There's a nice camping area with a nearby spring, well-used by horsemen, at the 8,200-foot elevation. The trail then climbs to 8,800 feet before heading south along the mountainside. Above the main timberline it passes by one more spring before dipping into a basin, also heavily used by horse travelers and containing a stove and makeshift toilet.

Although Forest Service and U.S. Geological Survey maps have the trail marked as continuing south

raised nearly $800 for some equipment needed. After everyone left, I returned to my office to get some work done. An hour later, as I prepared to leave, I was confronted by a couple I did not recognize. They threatened me and took the $800, plus some petty cash. Before leaving, they bound me tightly with rope and duct tape and gagged me. It was several hours later when my husband became concerned because I had not come home and drove to the school, found and released me.

Abby, without my knowledge, the students got together, and within a week they raised $1,000 to replace the money that was stolen. They also showered me with handmade cards expressing their love.

Despite all the negative things we hear about American kids, these terrific children represent

DEAR ABBY: Five years ago, I became pregnant during an affair I had with a guy who wouldn't have anything more to do with me after I told him I was pregnant.

I was young and frightened at the time and didn't know how I could support a baby, so I convinced another guy with whom I had been intimate a few times that the baby I was expecting was his. He believed me and agreed to take legal responsibility. He has been paying me child support for nearly five years.

What really scares me now is that my son doesn't look anything like the guy who's supporting him, and every day he gets to look more like his real father. Suppose someone notices this and I have to take my son for a blood test? Would I then be in trouble with the law because I've been taking money un-

lawyer. If you don't know one, consult your local Legal Aid Society, or a family services agency. Then, put an end to the deceit and take your son in for a blood test; tell the man whom you wrongly named as your son's father — as well as the man who is actually the father — that you want to set the record straight. To continue to perpetuate the lie about your son's paternity is morally wrong.

The biological father's medical history could be very important to your son — particularly if there are hereditary diseases in his family.

Canadian coins, Canadian coins, get your Canadian coins here . . .

Over a period of some years I have received in change from our local merchants some Canadian coins of various denominations.

Is there a place in town where I could exchange these coins for American money? — M.E.S., Murray.

As far as we know, not one foreign exchange office in Utah will buy foreign coins. And very few elsewhere will.

It doesn't matter whether they're Candian coins, French francs, Belgian francs, Swiss francs, Mexican pesos, etc.

Reasons vary, depending on who you talk to.

One person said it's not cost effective to exchange coins because it's expensive to ship them back to the country from whence they came.

ing creative strategies:

- Pass them off at the local merchants that passed them off to you in the first place.
- Try them in a parking meter, cigarette machine or vending machine.
- Spend your vacation this summer in the state of Washington and sell them there. Worth the trip, don't you think?

Speaking of coins . . .

Hand-held metal detectors similar to those used by security guards at airports, defense plants and elsewhere are helping physicians find coins that little children swallow.

Pediatricians at Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago say the detectors quickly pinpoint the exact locations of coins as small as a dime. If the money is in the stomach, nature will take care of the problem. If the coin is stuck in the

and Morgan counties?

If you answered Francis you're correct because, strangely enough, the two tallest mountains in the Wasatch Range dividing the two counties share the same name. So, if you thought two Hill Field Roads in north Davis County was strange, here's another major duplication for the record.

The best-known Francis Peak is the one with the radar domes on it above Lagoon (9,515 feet above sea level). The more obscure Francis Peak is 3.5 miles farther north (elevation 9,706 feet), directly east of East Layton's Cherry Lane and Snow Canyon. Both straddle the Morgan and Davis county line.

The northern Francis is listed on U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Geographical maps as "Francis VABM.' The U.S. Geological Survey office in Salt Lake City reports that VABM means "vertical angle bench mark" and refers to the presence of a triangulation station on the peak.

Information obtained from the Geographical Survey's Cartography office reveals how the two highest peaks came to share the same name.

The key mountain peaks in northern Utah were re-surveyed in the 1950s using triangulation methods. One such VABM point was set up in 1954 on the unnamed 9,706-foot peak north of the original Francis Peak.

The Geological Survey office reports it is not unusual for some of the highest peaks in the state to be nameless. For example, more than 15 unnamed peaks in the High Uintas exceed 13,000 feet in height.

The triangulation survey teams were reportedly notorious for naming unnamed geographical features after already named natural points. Although this method wasn't the official way to do things, it still put the name Francis on all geographical maps from 1955 on, and hence on other maps too, such as those of the Forest Service. When this name dubbing took place, the original Francis Peak was still a jagged mountain with no radar towers on it.

Mountain-climbing expert Michael R. Kelsey refers to the taller 9,706-foot Francis Peak as "North Francis Peak" in several

See **PEAKS** *on C2*

A pile of rocks atop North Francis Peak is hikers' way of making it even taller.

matter of definition. From here on, the trail all but ends, and though a few orange flags tied to the brush are an attempt to mark the path for a while, it's still a scramble to the top of the ridge — especially in the spring with snow fields around. With all the loose rocks and cliffs near here, extreme caution is advised.

Once on the ridge, a U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle map of the Peterson area is a necessity to single out the correct Francis Peak with an elevation of 9,706 (or 9,707 on older maps).

There are a few game trails to follow, but basically hikers must decide where to go, step by step, without the aid of a marked path. (If you've ever wondered how an area would have looked before man came along, this may answer your question.)

You'll know if you reach the correct highest peak because it has a U.S. Geologicial Survey marker imbedded in a rock on top near a pile of rocks and sticks. In fact, it appears hikers have made a game out of adding a few rocks to the top of the pile at each visit to add height to the peak (I added two feet myself.)

There's also a black plastic time capsule tube on the peak, full of notes left by previous hikers. One hiker even left a memo signed by Karl Malone regarding some sort of summer mountain climbing and drug-free program he endorsed a few years ago.

(Here I am on the highest peak around for 20 miles, during the NBA playoffs, and the first name I come across is Malone's!)

Another hiker left a list of Utah's tallest peaks and

See HIKE *on C2*